

Biennium budget cuts -- FY2011-13

On December 15, 2010, Governor Christine Gregoire announced her budget recommendations for the new biennium, including cuts to existing Medicaid programs.

Here is additional detail on the major cuts and changes to the Medicaid program as well as how those cuts would be implemented, and which services would no longer be available. These cuts may change as additional legislative decisions about the budget are made during the 2011 session. Medicaid will update this website as these decisions are made.

Adult Podiatry

Medicaid would no longer reimburse for adult (age 21 and older) foot care when it is not medically necessary to treat an acute condition. Podiatrists and physicians would be given a list of diagnosis codes for foot care that would continue to be covered by Medicaid. Treatment for conditions that are not on the list of covered diagnoses may be reviewed for medical necessity using the Exception to Rule process.

School-Based Medical Services for Children in Special Education

Medicaid will no longer reimburse school districts for health care-related services included in a Medicaid enrolled child's Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or Individualized Education Program (IEP) in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These services include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology, nursing services, counseling services and psychological assessments. Medicaid would continue to cover these therapies from community providers for children.

Medicare Part D Co-Pays

Clients with Medicare Part D as their primary payer for prescription drugs have a small co-pay requirement with each prescription, typically between \$2 and \$3. In the past, Washington State is one of a few states to pay this Part D co-pay requirement for clients who were eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. With this cut, Medicaid would eliminate these payments, and clients would need to pay their co-pay as an out-of-pocket expense.

Interpreter Services

Washington State is one of 13 states that underwrite the cost of spoken language interpretation for medical appointments for Medicaid clients and providers through a series of regional brokers who subcontract with interpreter agencies. Because these costs are a provider's responsibility under federal law, Medicaid would expect providers to make separate arrangements to continue medical interpreter services without state subsidies. Interpreters may be needed for both children and adults, so this is one of the few 2010 cuts proposed by Medicaid that will affect client children (under age 21), albeit indirectly. DSHS still will provide Interpreter Services for "public assistance" (social interpreting).

Medical Care for Disability Lifeline

This cut would eliminate Medical Care Services for people in the Disability Lifeline Program, previously known as General Assistance – Unemployable or GA-U. This cut would affect approximately 15,000 people. The program is completely state-funded, so it can be eliminated without federal approval.

Children's Health Program (CHP)

CHP is a children's medical program underneath the umbrella of Apple Health for Kids. It offers medical coverage to children in families that can meet the income eligibility standards (up to 300 percent of Federal Poverty Level) of Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program but cannot qualify for the federal-state programs – usually because the children are undocumented. Cutting the program will mean the loss of health coverage for approximately 27,000 children now covered by it.